

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A method for authorizing a client computer to access a second computer based upon previously provided authorization to access a first computer, comprising:

- (a) receiving a request to access said second computer;
- (b) in response to said request,
  - (i) determining a session length indicating a length of time said client computer has been authorized to access said first computer,
  - (ii) calculating a hash value for an authorization ticket received from said first computer, said session length, and a secret shared between said client computer and said second computer, and
  - (iii) transmitting a request for authorization to said second computer comprising said hash value, said authorization ticket, and said session length.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said authorization ticket comprises a time stamp, and wherein determining a session length comprises subtracting said time stamp from an elapsed time counter to determine said session length.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein said elapsed time counter is started when said authorization ticket is received from said first computer.

4. The method of Claim 3, wherein said authorization ticket is received from said first computer when said client computer is authorized to access said first compute.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein calculating a hash value comprises performing an MD5 hash of an authorization ticket received from said first computer, said session length, and a secret shared between said client computer and said second computer.

6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

starting a persistence timer;

determining whether said persistence timer has reached a predefined value prior to receiving a response from said second computer; and

in response to determining that said persistence time has reached a predefined value prior to receiving a response from said second computer, deleting said authorization ticket, said session length and said hash value from said client computer.

7. The method of Claim 6, further comprising:

in response to determining that said persistence timer has not reached a predefined value prior to receiving a response from said second computer, receiving said response from said second computer and displaying said response at said client computer.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein said first computer comprises an instant messaging server computer and wherein said second computer comprises a Web server computer.

9. A computer-controlled apparatus operative to perform the method of Claim 1.

10. A computer-controlled apparatus operative to perform the method of Claim 1.

11. A computer-readable medium containing computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform the method of Claim 1.

12. A computer-readable medium containing computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform the method of Claim 2.

13. A method for authorizing a client computer to access a second computer based upon previously provided authorization to access a first computer, comprising:

(a) receiving a request for authorization to access said second computer from said client computer comprising a hash value, an authorization ticket, and a session length;

(b) computing a new hash value for said authorization ticket, said session length, and a copy of a secret shared between said client computer and said second computer;

(c) determining whether said hash value received from said client computer is identical to said new hash value; and

(d) in response to determining that said hash value received from said client computer is identical to said new hash value, authorizing said client computer to access said second computer.

14. The method of Claim 13, further comprising:

(e) in response to determining that said hash value received from said client computer is identical to said new hash value,

(i) determining whether a sum of said session length and a time stamp received as part of said authorization ticket is within a preset threshold value of a current time, and

(ii) in response to determining that the sum of said session length and said time stamp is within said preset threshold value, authorizing said client computer to access said second computer.

15. The method of Claim 14, further comprising:

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(f) in response to determining that said hash value received from said client computer is not identical to said new hash value, not authorizing said client computer to access said second computer.

16. The method of Claim 15, further comprising:

(g) in response to determining that the sum of said session length and said time stamp is not within said preset threshold value, not authorizing said client computer to access said second computer.

17. A computer-controlled apparatus operative to perform the method of Claim 13.

18. A computer-controlled apparatus operative to perform the method of Claim 14.

19. A computer-readable medium containing computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform the method of Claim 13.

20. A computer-readable medium containing computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform the method of Claim 14.

21. The method of Claim 13, wherein said first computer comprises an instant messaging server computer and wherein said second computer comprises a Web server computer.

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